

Pastor: LIHEAP energy assistance funding for Arizona would

increase under legislation passed in House today

WASHINGTON -- Arizona would see a significant increase in funding for an energy assistance program that helps the disadvantaged with their utility bills under a continuing resolution bill that passed today in the U.S. House of Representatives, announced Rep. Ed Pastor, D-Ariz. The bill passed with a vote of 370-58.

Under the increased funding, **Arizona's allocation from the Low Income Heating Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) would grow to \$28.08 million in 2009 from the \$8.3 million Arizona received in 2008**, Pastor said. The previous funding level only assisted about four percent of the Arizona families who qualify for LIHEAP.

"The Democrats in the Appropriations Committee understood the shortfall and are trying to make up for the additional costs we face in states like Arizona to cool our homes," Pastor said Wednesday. "This increase does not fully fund Arizona's need, but I will continue to bring attention to our state's situation so that we may receive fair consideration for funding when competing with other states."

Pastor said Arizona's need is evident because of the region's severe and abnormally hot weather. Furthermore, the strong population growth in the Phoenix metropolitan area has driven up the need for assistance, especially among elderly and children.

Pastor said the bill will be sent to the Senate for consideration before going to the President for his signature. The LIHEAP funding was included in a continuing resolution bill, which would allow the government to continue operating in the absence of a budget.